

# Farleigh College Swindon

## Inspection report

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Unique reference number: 131888

Name of lead inspector: Diane Stacey HMI

Last day of inspection: 14 January 2010

Type of provider: Independent specialist college

Address: 43 Bath Road,  
Old Town,  
Swindon.  
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## Information about the provider

1. Farleigh Further Education College, Swindon, (Farleigh College) was established in September 2004 as part of Priory Education Services, which provides additional specialist provision across the country for young people with autistic spectrum conditions (ASC). Learners are mostly aged between 16 and 19 on admission and the duration of placement ranges between one and three years. Farleigh College currently supports 49 learners of whom 21 attend daily and 28 are residential. Of these learners 42 are male. The majority of learners are funded by the Learning and Skills Council. Six learners receive funding from the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), Welsh Assembly Government.
2. Farleigh College provides individual programmes for learners, mostly delivered within three local further education college partnerships. A small group of five learners follow in-house programmes. As well as their main academic programme, all learners have individual elements to develop social and independence skills. Learners have access to a learning resource centre based on the campus of one of the mainstream colleges, which has been specifically provided for Farleigh College learners. The LRC resource provides additional literacy, numeracy, therapy, and counselling services for Farleigh College learners.
3. Residential provision is offered in four different establishments. One large house caters for 13 residential learners and three smaller houses each offer accommodation for five learners. All residences are situated within Swindon's Old Town.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: Further education (16 to 18)	34 full-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	15 full-time learners

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

## Overall effectiveness

4. The college's overall effectiveness is good. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve and has made steady progress since the last inspection to improve the majority of weaknesses. Learners achieve good outcomes and enjoy their learning. Learners progress very well to higher or further education and into employment when they leave the college. Teaching and learning are good. Very effective use is made of the partnerships with three local further education colleges. Farleigh College learners are able to choose from a broad range of vocational and academic courses that meets their interests and aspirations. The care, guidance and support learners receive are good. Therapeutic support for learners by Farleigh College is outstanding. Leadership and management are good. Safeguarding arrangements and safety practices are a priority and are good. The promotion of equality and diversity is good, although managers need to develop the analysis and use of data about learners' activities more fully. Managers also need to develop the quality monitoring arrangements further to ensure all potential improvements to learners' experiences are formally identified and acted on.

## Main findings

- Learners' outcomes are good. Success rates for vocational and academic qualifications are high. Learners make good progress in developing independent living skills. Most learners achieve their literacy and numeracy qualifications. Progression is good. Learners move on to higher and further education and into

open or supported employment. However, they do not sufficiently develop their employability skills through realistic work settings.

- The college does not have a sufficiently developed system for recording overall, and on-going, progress and achievement in all learners' programmes.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and learning support staff are skilled in meeting the individual needs of learners. There is a rigorous initial assessment process which provides clear strategies to support effective teaching. However, targets in individual learning plans are insufficiently specific to record learners' progress accurately at termly reviews.
- Individualised programmes meet learners' needs very well. Enrichment activities are good for both residential and day learners, although not all day learners participate in the evening or weekend activities.
- Partnership working is good. Farleigh College links with local further education colleges very effectively and it works well with community groups in the area. However, employer links need further development.
- Specialist therapeutic support is outstanding. It includes speech and language interventions, solution-focused therapy, creativity development, counselling, anger management, Asperger's awareness, sex education and art therapy. In response to some learners' dislike of the notion of individual therapy, the college now offers specialist support in the form of short courses.
- Individual support for independent living skills and support in the classroom is good. Learners receive well-informed and constructive support from key workers and learning support workers, which contributes substantially to their progress.
- Information, advice and guidance are good, both initially and in response to learners' changing needs. The new transition curriculum is well structured and comprehensive and there are good links with the local Connexions service. However, leavers from outside Wiltshire do not receive sufficient information on progression opportunities in their home areas.
- Leadership and management are good with a clear strategic direction that drives forward improvements and expansion of the college's provision. Excellent use is made of the parent company's e-learning portal to provide external and in-house training to ensure that staff are well equipped to teach and support learners appropriately.
- The college has good safeguarding and safety practices for all environments and activities experienced by learners. There is a strong focus on safe recruitment practices and up-to-date training for all staff.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good, with some particularly effective consideration of issues embedded very well within teaching and learning situations. A broad range of activities encourage learners to evaluate their knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity. However, data are not sufficiently analysed or used to identify trends or gaps in achievements.
- The self-assessment process satisfactorily includes the views of learners and staff. The detailed quality development plan clearly highlights progress against

rigorous targets. A teaching and learning observation process is well-established. However, the college has only recently introduced a formal process to monitor the quality of all aspects of learners' activities, such as individual learning plans and target setting.

### What does Farleigh College need to do to improve further?

- Develop the formal system for monitoring elements of learners' activities so that managers have clear records and actions for all areas that need further development.
- Develop a centralised and comprehensive system for recording all aspects of learners' on-going progress and achievement.
- Ensure targets are sufficiently detailed to reflect the progress of learners.
- As identified in its self-assessment report, the college needs to increase the number and duration of work experience placements to improve the development of learners' employability skills.
- Produce printed information for final-year learners and their carers on accessing assessment, support, education, social and work opportunities in their home areas to increase progression destinations.
- Develop the analysis and use of equality and diversity data to inform managers of any trends and gaps in learners' recruitment and achievements, and to make improvements where necessary.

### Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

#### What learners like:

- the good learning support staff who help them to become more independent
- being able to cook the evening meal weekly for the whole house
- using the therapy sessions which help them become upset or angry much less often
- being able to travel independently
- the range of sports and activities available in the evenings and at weekends
- the enrichment centre and the courses on offer at the local colleges
- becoming much more confident in the company of other people
- the living accommodation.

#### What learners would like to see improved:

- more and better quality IT facilities in the houses
- some of the rules
- a greater selection of healthy meals.

## Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

### What employers like:

- the open and honest relationship with Farleigh College
- the excellent and positive staff and their approachability
- the good communications.

### What employers would like to see improved:

- more reinforcement of the training delivered during work placements
- quicker responses to requests to discuss issues about learners.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

5. Farleigh College's capacity to improve is good. Strategic management and the use of its three-year quality development plan, linked to strategic objectives, are very effective in setting challenging targets to drive forward improvements and new developments for the college. Established formal partnerships with local further education colleges contribute very effectively to the good achievements and success of learners. The particularly good training opportunities ensure that staff develop the skills and knowledge needed to support learners well. All strengths have been maintained since the previous inspection, with therapeutic support and the range of courses developed still further. The college has made improvements in the majority of weaknesses identified during the previous inspection, although monitoring of some activities for learners still needs further development. Self-assessment is inclusive of the views of staff and learners and is used satisfactorily to identify most of the college's strengths and weaknesses. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate in its grading, although it does not provide sufficient evaluation or evidence to back up some of the judgements.

### Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

6. Learners' outcomes are good. Success rates for qualifications on vocational and academic courses are high, with 91% of learners in 2008/09 achieving their primary learning goals. Learners make good progress in developing independent living skills, particularly in learning to prepare food for their households and in travelling independently. Nearly 90% of learners achieve literacy and numeracy qualifications. They genuinely enjoy their learning. However, the college lacks a comprehensive system for recording learners' progress and achievements across all aspects of their college programme.
7. Progression is good. In 2008/09, 77% moved on to higher education, further education, open or supported employment. Learners improve their ability to deal with money and they become more confident and able to travel independently. However, as the college recognises, learners do not develop sufficiently their employability skills through realistic work settings.
8. The extent to which learners feel safe is good. In the most recent survey 97% of learners stated they were comfortable about their safety, both in college and in their residences. The reduction in their anxiety around unfamiliar people is significant.
9. Learners make satisfactory choices about their health and most develop some awareness of healthy eating. They start to be aware of issues around sexual health and internet safety. Learners' contributions to the community are satisfactory. Learners take part in a small number of charity fundraising events

and attend local events. Two learners have worked voluntarily in a small branch library to enable it to avoid closure.

## The quality of provision

Grade 2

10. Teaching, training and assessment practices are good. Initial assessment procedures are thorough and provide clear strategies for all staff working with individual learners. Independent living skills training is set in a realistic context within the residencies and the learning resource centre. Staff raise learners' awareness of equality and diversity matters well and promote appropriate health and safety practices. The provision for literacy and numeracy support has improved since the previous inspection and this is now an integral part of learners' programmes where it has been identified as a need. Individual learning plans however do not contain sufficiently detailed targets to recognise learners' progression effectively. Good use is made of information and communication technology in the classrooms and the learning resource centre. Learners make good use of the partner colleges' computer suites.
11. Individual planning provides a robust personalised programme of study for each learner. These meet their needs very well by providing a broad range of vocational and academic courses at partner colleges. A good range of enrichment activities contributes to both day and residential learners' enjoyment. Learners help to identify and plan activities. However, not all day learners participate in evening and weekend activities.
12. Specialist therapeutic support is outstanding. A substantial programme of specialist support includes over 60 hours a week of individual and group therapeutic initiatives. These include speech and language interventions, solution-focused therapy, creativity development, counselling, anger management, Asperger's awareness, sex education, outdoor therapy, art therapy and motivational interviewing. In response to some learners' dislike of the notion of individual therapy, short courses are made available which many find more acceptable.
13. Individual support for independent living skills and in the classroom is good and contributes substantially to learners' progress. Staff are well qualified in health and social care and they undergo substantial amounts of specialist training related to Asperger's condition. Additionally, nearly all staff now have literacy and numeracy qualifications at level 2 and above. Most learners receive continual individual support for managing anxiety and helping them to focus better.
14. Information, advice and guidance are good, both initially and in response to learners' changing needs. Comprehensive information is available for parents and learners prior to enrolment. The new transition curriculum is well structured and comprehensive and there are good links with the local Connexions service. However, leavers from outside Wiltshire do not receive sufficient information on progression opportunities in their home areas.



## Leadership and management

Grade 2

15. The principal and senior managers provide good leadership and clear strategic direction for the college. Managers use the detailed quality development plan well to identify key developments and to monitor regularly their implementation. Learners continue to benefit very well from formal links with local further education colleges. Arrangements to meet the changing needs of learners have been effectively implemented. The college has seen a significant growth in the number of day learners. A new curriculum has been developed and more staff have been appointed to meet the increased numbers of learners who require additional support. Communication with staff and partner colleges is good.
16. Staff skills are well developed. An excellent e-learning facility provides a wide range of training modules. The take-up of learning is very high. The system is used effectively to record the extensive external training that staff undertake and provides easy monitoring of the progress of staff against timely targets. A significant majority of staff now hold qualifications at level 2 in literacy and numeracy.
17. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Policies and procedures for young people and vulnerable adults are updated and in line with national requirements. The very thorough recruitment policy and practices ensure that Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are routinely carried out prior to staff taking up appointments and these are regularly updated. Telephone calls double check references. A policy and procedures document for prescribed medications is clearly written. All staff complete the mandatory child protection and protection of vulnerable adults e-learning modules, which are regularly updated, during induction. In-house training on safeguarding is also arranged. Good attention is given to ensure that risk assessments are carried out for individual learners and for all activities in which they engage.
18. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college implements its policies to prevent discrimination very well, and it has developed a single equality scheme and a related action plan. Impact assessments have been implemented. The promotion and use of equality and diversity matters within teaching are good. Learners take part in a diverse range of activities and they are encouraged to rate their knowledge prior to, and after, each event to evaluate how much they have learnt. The equality and diversity committee includes a learner representative and reports monthly to the senior management team. Thorough arrangements are in place to deal with incidents and complaints. The proportion of staff from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than that of the local population. However, the percentage of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds has been consistently low and little has been done to redress this. The college is not sufficiently rigorous in analysing its data in relation to the application, participation and outcomes for different groups of learners in order to identify any disparity in performance.

19. The involvement of learners in the life of the college is satisfactory. The college has recently set up a student council with representatives from the residences as well as a day student representative. Minutes of the meetings are shared with the senior management team. Students' house meetings cover a wide range of issues and are well recorded.
20. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory overall. The self-assessment process is inclusive of the views of learners, staff, parents and parent company staff. The self-assessment report, however, does not provide sufficient evaluation or evidence to support all judgements. The observation of teaching and learning scheme is well established and arrangements have been formalised to share performance data with staff at a local partner college. The college's quality audit plan does not, however, adequately indicate how the college monitors all learners' activities. The college has very recently introduced a formal system to review individual learning plans and target setting and set actions to improve them. It is too early, however, to have had an impact and learners' individual targets were judged to be insufficiently detailed during inspection.
21. The parent organisation provides effective support and oversight of the college. The quality of resources is good. The standard of teaching and residential accommodation is good. The college provides good value for money.

## Information about the inspection

22. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's head of student support, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
23. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Farleigh College Swindon**  
 Learning types: 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full-time courses; 19+ responsive: FE full-time courses

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners	49	34	15
Full-time learners			
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2		
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2		
How well do learners progress?	2		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3		
How safe do learners feel?	2		
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	3		
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	3		
Quality of provision	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2		
Leadership and management	2	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2		
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	3		
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2		
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2		

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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